Code of Conduct & Ethics Quiz

QUESTION

Though people work for the Federal Government, what they do in the off-the Job in private life is of little concern or interest to then employer. Is this accurate?

ANSWER

Certainly people who work for the Federal Government are entitled to their private lives. at the same time, if the conduct or action of an employee in off-the job pursuits or conduct is harmful to the Department's reputation or renders an employee unable to perform duties in a proper manner, then that conduct or behavior could lead to disciplinary action including termination of employment.

WHY IS IT RIGHT

PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA CODE OF CONDUCT

People are employed at Public Safety Canada to work for the Canadian people.

The Department's mission is to build a safe and resilient Canada and are obligated to ensure that everything done whether administrative, policy, coordination, advisory or other capacity contributes to the safety and security of all Canadians.

The principles set out in the Public Safety Canada Code of Conduct (the Code) are intended to help understand those rules and standards of conduct which are necessary to achieve professional goals and objectives. The Code also provides direction in situations where the right course of action, when faced with a difficult situation, may not always be clear.

The Code applies to employees at all levels of Public Safety Canada. Managers and senior executives are expected to set an example by demonstrating high ethical and professional standards in their own conduct. It should also be noted that due to the nature of their duties, certain positions within the Department have a higher level of risk from the perspective of standards of conducts, and as a result, the conduct of the incumbents of these positions would be subject to a higher level of scrutiny.

The Code is designed to assist us in incorporating the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's values to our departmental values of **Service, Unity, Respect and Excellence.** It is through adhering to all of these that we can build a strong and durable culture of ethics in our Department.

Purpose

By re-committing to the values of the Public Service, and adhering to the behaviour outlined in this Code, we, as public servants employed at Public Safety Canada, strengthen the ethical culture of the public sector and maintain public confidence in the integrity of all public institutions.

This document also fulfills our requirement to implement an Organizational Code of Conduct following Parliament's decision to enact the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act* (PSDPA).

Objectives

This Code outlines the values and expected behaviours that area guide to all activities related to professional duties. It was developed in consultation with employees, management and bargaining agents. This Code is consistent with the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector (VECPS), as required by the subsection 6(2) of the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act*.

Values

The VECPS includes five core values: respect for democracy; respect for people; integrity; stewardship and excellence. These encompass several other principles such as lawfulness, impartiality, honesty, courtesy, transparency, accountability and professionalism. Public Safety Canada endorses the **core values** and aims to integrate them at all levels of decision making.

Respect for Democracy

The system of Canadian parliamentary democracy and its institutions are fundamental to serving the public interest. Public servants recognize that elected officials are accountable to Parliament, and ultimately to the Canadian people, and that a non-partisan public sector is essential to our democratic system.

Respect for People

Treating all people with respect, dignity and fairness is fundamental to our relationship with the Canadian public and contributes to a safe and healthy work environment that promotes engagement, openness and transparency. The diversity of people and the ideas they generate are the source of our innovation.

Integrity

Integrity is the cornerstone of good governance and democracy. By upholding the highest ethical standards, public servants conserve and enhance public confidence in the honesty, fairness and impartiality of the federal public sector.

Stewardship

Federal public servants are entrusted to use and care for public resources responsibly, for both the short-term and long-term.

Excellence

Excellence in the design and delivery of public sector policy, programs and services is beneficial to every aspect of Canadian public life. Engagement, collaboration, effective teamwork and professional development are all essential to a high-performing organization.

Moreover, we are also expected to adhere to the values of **Service, Unity, Respect and Excellence** as defined in Public Safety Canada's Mission, Vision and Values Statement:

- **Service**: We serve the public. We deliver high quality, timely programs and services that are responsive to the needs of all Canadians including our employees.
- **Unity**: We bring people together by building trust through team work, collaboration and integration.
- **Respect**: In a diverse society, we demonstrate integrity and respect for each other, our partners, our institutions and Canadians, both as taxpayers and as citizens.
- **Excellence**: We are driven by professionalism, innovation and achieving results for Canadians.

WHY IS EVERYTHING ELSE WRONG

GENERAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Expected Behaviors

The following outlines **expected behaviors** required by Public Safety Canada's employees. They are not exhaustive but illustrative in which core values guide in everyday situations.

A) CARE AND USE OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY OR VALUABLES, AND TAXPAYER PROPERTY HELD BY PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA

We are responsible for government property or valuables and for taxpayer property in our possession or control. We are expected to report lost, stolen or damaged items to our manager.

- **Property:** This includes but is not restricted to, computers (including laptops), Blackberries, software, electronic and paper files, documents and data, office equipment and supplies, video equipment, telecommunication devices, ID, vehicles, and physical premises.
- **Valuables:**This includes, but is not restricted to, taxi chits, government credit cards (including those use for travel) and telephone calling cards.

While government-owned or leased property and valuables are intended for official purposes, limited and acceptable personal use may be permitted subject to managerial approval.

B) CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Upon employment with the government, we take an oath or solemn affirmation that we will not disclose or make known any matter that comes to our knowledge by reason of our employment. As such, we are expected to keep in strict confidence all information not made available to the general public, including policies, programs, practices and procedures, as well as any personal information of other individuals that we have access to in the course of our duties. This requirement also applies to former employees after they leave the employ of the Department.

This type of information may be disclosed to clients or designated representatives if specifically authorized by legislative or departmental guidelines.

- **Access to information and privacy**
- **Security of information**
- **Providing testimony or information**

C) CONSUMPTION OF INTOXICANTS AND SMOKING

For health and safety reasons, as well as to maintain a work-like environment, the Department does not permit the consumption of alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, or other intoxicants at the office or while on any premises where we conduct our business. We are therefore expected to refrain from consuming such substances, except in situations where an Assistant Deputy Minister has authorized the limited, controlled consumption of alcohol for a special event in an area not open to the public.

We are expected to never report to work under the influence of alcohol, cannabis or other drugs or intoxicants.

We should exercise goodwill and respect by refraining from smoking near building entrances and air intake ducts and observing applicable local laws, bylaws, or restrictions imposed by building owners on smoking in the workplace or in public spaces.

D) CONTACT WITH THE PUBLIC AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS

In the eyes of many clients, we represent not only Public Safety Canada, but the entire federal public service. Courteous, prompt, sensitive and professional service to the public and external partners in our official capacities reflects well on all of us.

We are expected to refrain from making abusive, derisive, threatening, insulting, offensive or provocative remarks or gestures to, or about, another person.

E) APPEARANCE

A professional, neat appearance and dressing appropriately for our duties will project a positive image of Public Safety Canada in public and in dealing with stakeholders.

F) ELECTRONIC NETWORK ACCESS AND USE

If we access or use Public Safety Canada’s computer systems, equipment or software, we must make every effort to protect Public Safety Canada from any possible threats to security and guard against:

- accidental or deliberate destruction of equipment and data;
- disclosure of sensitive information loss of removable media containing departmental files (for examples CDs or USB keys);
- theft and corruption; and
- exposure to viruses.

All information obtained, stored, sent or received using Public Safety Canada’s electronic networks is subject to routine monitoring, and will be reviewed when there are reasonable grounds to do so. As a result, we should not expect privacy when visiting websites or sending e-mails while using the Department’s electronic network.

G) FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND FRAUD

As employees, we may be responsible for collecting, receiving, managing or distributing public money. These are serious responsibilities and we are expected to comply with applicable laws, regulations and policies. Responsible financial management and the prevention of fraud are matters of public trust.

- **Care of money**

We are expected to be extremely diligent in accounting for, safeguarding, and disposing of any government money, including petty cash, in our possession or control; we are expected to do so according to established procedures and reasonable standards of care.

- **Contracting and procurement**

We are expected to evaluate all contracts in a fair and objective manner, free from personal influences or bias. We are expected never to receive, or be perceived as receiving, any personal benefit from any contract on which we have influence. This includes accepting bribes, which is an indictable offence that may lead to criminal charges and carry penalties that include fines and imprisonment.

Borrowing, lending, or soliciting money

We are expected never to:

- borrow money from a client, or present a personal cheque to be cashed by a client; or
- ask any employee under our supervision to sign a financial instrument, as an endorser or co-maker, to ensure an amount of money is being lent or borrowed.

Soliciting money from co-workers is restricted to collecting voluntary contributions towards gifts for events such as marriage, retirement, bereavement, etc., and for authorized charitable purposes such as the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign. In addition, passive solicitation – solicitation which does not rely on the use of Public Safety Canada's e-mail network – to support local fundraising campaigns such as children's sport events, girl guides, etc, is considered acceptable.

Illicit gambling

We are expected to refrain from gambling on Public Safety Canada's premises or while on duty. Social, voluntary draws, usually called "50-50" – collections taken up by employees to establish a sum of money, half of which will go to the winner of the draw and the other half to charity – are not covered by this code because they do not constitute solicitation of the private sector. However, it should be noted that draws of this type are regulated by provincial authorities and subject to licensing requirements.

Overpayment of public funds

The Department will recover any monetary advance paid to us that we do not repay or account for, and will recover any amount paid to us in error such as overpaid salary or benefits, as well as any public money lost through any negligence or misconduct on our part.

Fraud

Using our position for personal enrichment, or that of a friend, family member, or associate, through the misuse or misappropriation of the organization's resources or assets, may constitute fraud.

Examples:

- attempting to obtain leave to which we are not entitled;
- falsely reporting overtime, travel time, expense accounts, or taxi expenses;

- using our Public Safety Canada's credit card for personal purchases;
- failing to report any violation or fraud concerning the *Financial Administration Act* and its regulations, or any other revenue law; and
- conspiring or colluding to defraud the Crown, or providing the opportunity for someone else to do so.

Fraudulent activities are subject to administrative and disciplinary action up to, and including, termination of employment. Some cases of fraud against the Crown are indictable offenses that may lead to criminal charges and carry penalties including fines and imprisonment.

H) STAFFING

The *Public Service Employment Act*, regulations and related policies guide all staffing processes. Those of us who are hiring managers are expected to ensure that all staffing actions are consistent with the values of fairness, access, transparency and representativeness, as identified by the Public Service Commission (PSC). All appointments must be based on merit, non-partisan and free from personal biases.

I) OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The *Official Languages Act*, regulations and related policies guide our behaviour in this regard. Public Safety Canada provides and maintains a work environment that is conducive to the effective use of both official languages.

J) HOURS OF WORK

All Public Safety Canada employees are expected to maintain their scheduled hours of work and follow established processes for the approval of leave, as allowed under collective agreements or terms and conditions of employment. Doing so ensures the efficient operations of our work units.

K) HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND RESOLVING WORKPLACE ISSUES

The Department is committed to providing a respectful work environment where diversity is valued. While management is responsible for fostering a work environment free from harassment and discrimination, it is everyone's responsibility to treat colleagues fairly, respectfully and with dignity.

- **Harassment:**Any improper conduct by an individual, that is directed at and offensive to another person or persons in the workplace, and that the individual knew or ought reasonably to have known would cause offence or harm. It comprises any objectionable act, comment or display that demeans, belittles, or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment, and any act of intimidation or threat. It includes harassment within the meaning of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.
- **Discrimination:**The negative or adverse differential treatment of individuals on their race, age, religion, sex or other prohibited grounds of discrimination.

L) SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Department values our safety and security; we are expected to contribute to both by observing safety and security standards, rules, and procedures established for our work sites. Any work-related accidents or injuries, or any unsafe or hazardous conditions at work, must be reported immediately to managers.

M) TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS AND UNIONS

As employees, we are expected to respect the terms and conditions set out

in collective agreements or terms and conditions of employment. The *Public Service Labour Relations Act* sets out procedures for employee participation in employee organizations (unions). The Act also contains provisions that prohibit:

- intimidating employees in the creation or administration of employee organizations;
- restraining employees from becoming members of an employee organization; and
- discriminating against a member of an employee organization.

N) OFF-DUTY CONDUCT

We are expected to refrain from engaging in off-duty conduct that:

- is harmful to the Department's reputation;
- renders us unable to perform our duties in a satisfactory manner;
- leads other employees to refuse, be reluctant or be unable to work with us;
- renders us guilty of a serious breach of the *Criminal Code of Canada* and thus renders our conduct injurious to the general reputation of the Department and its employees; and
- makes it difficult for the Department to manage its operations efficiently or to direct its workforce.

O) PUBLICLY COMMENTING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA

Only authorized spokespersons can issue statements or comments on Public Safety Canada's position on a given subject. If asked for the Department's position, we are expected to refer the inquiries, through the manager, to the Communications Branch or the authorized Public Safety Canada spokesperson.

P) PUBLIC CRITICISM OF PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA

Public servants' duty of loyalty to the employer includes a commitment to be discreet and to refrain from public statements critical of the federal government. We are expected to avoid making, through public medium such as radio, television, blog or social networking sites (such as Facebook or Twitter), either directly or through a third party, any public pronouncement critical of Public Safety Canada's policies, programs, or officials, or on matters of current political controversy, where the statement or actions might create a conflict with the duties of our position at Public Safety Canada.

Public criticism may be justified in certain circumstances, including:

- the government is engaged in illegal acts;
- the government's policies jeopardize life, health or safety; and
- the public servant's criticism has no impact on his or her ability to perform effectively the duties of a public servant, or on the public's perception of that ability.

Q) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING WRONGDOING IN THE WORKPLACE

When we have reasonable grounds to believe that another person has committed a wrongdoing in the workplace, we should speak to the manager. If this does not seem appropriate in the circumstances, we may approach the Senior Officer for Disclosure with confidence that we will be treated fairly. If the matter is not appropriately addressed at this level, or there are reasons to believe it could not be disclosed in confidence within the Department, it may be referred to the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada.

Wrongdoing, defined in the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act* (PSDPA):

- the contravention of an Act of Parliament or of the legislature of a province, or of any regulations made under any such act;
- the misuse of public funds or assets;
- gross mismanagement in the federal public sector;
- a serious breach of a code of conduct;
- an act or omission that creates a substantial and specific danger to the life, health and safety of Canadians or the environment; and
- knowingly directing or counselling a person to commit a wrongdoing.

R) CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND POST-EMPLOYMENT:

We are expected to comply with the policy on conflict of interest and post-employment, which sets out the obligation to avoid and prevent situations that could give rise to a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest.

- **Real conflict:**Happens when there is a direct conflict between a public servant's current duties and responsibilities and their existing private interests.
- **Apparent conflict:**Occurs when there could be a reasonable perception that a public servant's private interests could improperly influence the performance of the public duties—whether or not this is in fact the case.
- **Potential conflict:**Arises in situations where a public servant has private interests that may not interfere with their official duties immediately but could interfere with their official duties in the future.

S) GIFTS, HOSPITALITY AND OTHER BENEFITS

Conflicts of interest may arise from seemingly innocuous situations. Therefore, we are expected to decline gifts, hospitality, or other benefits that could influence or appear to influence our judgement, or call into question our integrity or that of Public Safety Canada. The gift, hospitality and other benefits section of the policy on conflict of interest and post-employment contains details on accepting or refusing gifts, including the strict conditions and limitations that apply when accepting gifts.

We are expected never to solicit gifts, hospitality, other benefits or transfers of economic value from a person, group or organization in the private sector who has dealings with the government. Doing so without the written consent from a delegated manager is an offense under paragraph 121 (1) (c) of the *Criminal Code of Canada*, in addition to being subject to disciplinary sanctions.

T) POLITICAL ACTIVITY

We are entitled to express ourselves freely and to participate in political activities, but as public servants, we are expected to use discretion and judgement in doing so.

Political activity is:

- Any activity in support of, within, or in opposition to a political party;
- Any activity in support of or in opposition to a candidate before or during an election period; and
- Seeking nomination or standing as a candidate in a municipal, provincial, territorial, or federal election before or during an election period.

Scope

This Code is a condition of employment for all public servants employed at Public Safety Canada. We must therefore abide by it, and demonstrate the values of the federal public sector in our actions and behaviour. Disregarding these values and failure to meet these expectations may lead to administrative or disciplinary measures up to, and including, termination of employment.

This Code came into force on April 2, 2012. It will be subject to a review five years after it comes into effect.